



# FEMA

## NEWS RELEASE STATE/FEDERAL DISASTER FIELD OFFICE JOINT INFORMATION CENTER



Contact: Rob Harper, WEMD (425) 290-4129  
Diana Seifert, FEMA (425) 290-4132  
Richard Jenkins, SBA (916) 566-7240

December 3, 2003  
DR1499: PR029

### LEGAL HELP AVAILABLE FOR FLOOD DISASTER VICTIMS

EVERETT, WA – Volunteer attorneys are providing free, disaster-related legal assistance to low-income individuals affected by the October 15-23 floods. The service, coordinated through the American Bar Association (ABA) Young Lawyers Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is available by calling 1-800-467-0372.

Persons in the disaster declared counties may ask for help for flood-related questions about insurance claims, home repair contracts, consumer protection matters, landlord-tenant concerns, mortgage foreclosure and debt collection problems. Advice or referrals are also provided for replacing wills, drafting powers of attorney and other important legal documents damaged or lost in the flood.

“We are committed to using our abilities and resources to help victims of this disaster,” said Steven Marsalis, Young Lawyers Division representative for Oregon and Washington. “As members of the bar, we have an obligation to provide public service and promote the public interest, especially in difficult times.”

The federal disaster declaration for individual assistance covers the counties of Chelan, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Mason, Okanogan, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston and Whatcom.

On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

###